Coal shortage

347. SHRIMATI S.G. INDIRA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that many power plants are facing shortage of feedstock of coal;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether Government have approved the import of 12 million tonnes of thermal coal this year; and

(d) the steps being taken by Government to overcome the shortage of feedstock and also to launch the domestic production of coal?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COAL (DR. DASARI NARAYANA RAO): (a) Central Electricity Authority has reported that as on 19.7.2005, out of the 75 thermal power stations of the country, 13 were having coal stock for less than seven days consumption.

(b) The reasons for which coal stock at power house end gets depleted to critical level are:-

1. Perennial unloading constraints resulting in congestion in the rail movement, which in turn forces Railways to impose restriction in movement or rakes till congestion is cleared.
2. Delayed release of payment by power plants for coal value as well as railway freight often leading to regulation in movement of coal.
3. Constraints in transport logistics coming in the way of movement of coal resulting in lopsided distribution of available coal amongst power stations.
4. Power stations often consuming coal more than the allocated quantity given by Standing Linkage Committee (Short-term).

(c) Ministry of Power has directed 13 power utilities to import 13.45 million tonnes of coal during 2005-06.

(d) In view of the increased demand of coal by power utilities to meet the requirement of improved Plant Load Factor and capacity addition, import of coal is contemplated. In addition, an inter-ministerial sub-group

is regularly monitoring movement of coal to power utilities so that optimisation of available coal and transport logistics are ensured to reduce the number of power stations under critical category at minimum level. The monthly coal allocations to power stations by Standing Linkage Committee is being reviewed on quarterly basis and suitable changes are made in allocations keeping in view the need of the particular power station. Movement of coal to power stations is also periodically reviewed at the level of Cabinet Secretariat.

I.T. revolution

348. SHRI RUDRA NARAYAN PANY:
SHRI B.J. PANDA:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government propose to allot Rs. 500 crore for IT kiosks in villages in the country;

(b) if so, the details of their action plan; and

(c) the details of the action plan of Government to take the IT revolution to the villages of Orissa State under the projects?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) to (c) Department of Information Technology is working on a plan to establish 100,000 Common Service Centres across the country by the year 2007. Such Centres would have the flexibility to offer a mix of services (both Government and non-Government including localized services) that may be needed by the local community. Orissa could also be one of the beneficiary States for the CSCs.

Credibility of IT Industry

†349. SHRI MOTILAL VORA:
SHRIMATI PREMA CARIAPPA:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.